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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PSC OPENS PROCEEDINGS ON ADDING FOUR COUNTIES
TO UNITED WAY'S 2-1-1 SERVICE IN NEBRASKA**

LINCOLN –Four more Nebraska counties are included in a pair of applications from the United Way of the Midlands to extend its 2-1-1 dialing for health and human referrals.

The Nebraska Public Service Commission formally opened proceedings on the two August applications, one of which would add the northeast Nebraska counties of Burt, Cuming, and Thurston to United Way's First Call for Help Program (FCHP). Thayer County in south central Nebraska is the target of the second application.

United Way of the Midlands of Omaha currently provides the FCHP in the state. By simply dialing 2-1-1, a caller is provided with free referral service to health and human services agencies.

Commissioner Lowell Johnson of North Bend, whose Third District includes Burt, Cuming, and Thurston Counties, said 2-1-1 service is a proven commodity in the 30 counties in which it operates. "Seventy-five percent of the residents of Nebraska already have 2-1-1 service," Johnson said. "The program fills a void which no one previously has served. The Commission has looked favorably upon applications in the past for the benefit of persons who need the service."

In addition to the four counties in the latest two applications, the Commission in mid-July opened consideration of another application that would add Dixon and Wayne Counties to the First Call for Help Program. If the three pending applications are approved, 36 of Nebraska's 93 counties will be able to access FCHP by dialing 2-1-1.

Persons wishing to comment on the new applications have 30 days to do so. If no protests or interventions are received in that time, the Commission will hold a public meeting in the areas to be served before addressing United Way's requests.

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